



# Lateral class is first of its kind

A devastating loss for one city's police department became a boon for KCPD.

The aldermen in the neighboring city of Raytown slashed that police department's budget by \$2.8 million in October 2017. Raytown Police Chief Jim Lynch had warned this would mean at least 17 officers and most civilian staff would need to be laid off.

But no officer got laid off (several civilians did, though). That's because many resigned before the ax ever fell.

"I saw the writing on the wall, and things started to fall apart," said Ronald Davis, a former Raytown officer for five years. "Ten minutes after the Board of Aldermen meeting (that resulted in budget cuts), I e-mailed your recruiter."

Indeed, 10 former Raytown officers left that department and were hired by KCPD. Their experience ranges from one to 15 years.

An additional officer from Prairie Village joined them in what became the first broad-based lateral transfer Academy class.

"Before we just did piecemeal training with laterals," Training Unit Commander Captain Stephenie Price said. "We'd say, 'Well, you've had this, but you haven't had that, so we'll train you on that.'"

But the 11 people in this lateral class are part of something new: a pilot program of sorts meant to cover a full range of training topics.

"It's an abbreviated academy class," Captain Price said. "We took the most relevant-to-Kansas City-training and what could be the biggest sources of liability and focused on those things. ... The goal is to get them in the field as soon as we can while still knowing they can pass all requirements."

Captain Price and Training Division Commander Major Wayne Stewart visited six different police academies in

Missouri and Kansas to see how they train lateral transfers, as well as the Fort Leavenworth Staff Command College. They met with Missouri Peace Officer Standards and Training program officials. Then they worked with Academy staff to design an 11-week training program that could be used for lateral transfers from here, forward.



**Eleven officers came to the KCPD as lateral transfers Oct. 30, 2017. They went through a new, specially designed Academy program and will graduate alongside the traditional Entrant Officer Class on Jan. 11.**

Some of the Raytown officers, like Davis, already had been through the KCPD Academy, so much of it feels the same, he said. And their time working the streets left them well-versed with how to handle situations like domestic violence incidents, said Abygail Shockley, another former Raytown officer now in KCPD's lateral class. She had attended a different police academy, however. The defensive tactics training has been the most useful said Louis Curtis, the former Prairie Village officer who came to KCPD for more opportunity. His grandfather also served as a KCPD officer.

"The defensive tactics have been a good refresher because those skills are so perishable," Curtis said.

Captain Price said the lateral academy class isn't just about ensuring everyone knows KCPD policies, but also about becoming part of the Kansas City Missouri Police Department culture.

"We didn't want just Raytown officers who are now in Kansas City," she said. "... We want to indoctrinate them and make

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# Don Wagner joins Police Board

A long-time Kansas City business and civic leader is now on the Kansas City Missouri Board of Police Commissioners.

Don Wagner was sworn in at a quiet ceremony at the Jackson County Courthouse on Nov. 6, just three days after Missouri Gov. Eric Grietens announced his appointment. Wagner replaces Commissioner and former Board President Michael Rader, whose term had expired.

Prior to his appointment, Wagner was a member of the board of the Police Foundation of Kansas City. Recruited by Alan Atterbury, Wagner served on the Foundation since its inception. He said he loves Kansas City, which is what interested him in the group.

"It seems like the crime rate keeps us in the news, and that's not a good thing," he said. "I was hoping we could help with that."

The Foundation has donated more than \$1 million for equipment and training to the KCPD. (Its by-laws prevented Wagner from serving on both the Foundation Board and the Board of Police Commissioners.)

He said he learned about many facets of the department's work through the Foundation and got to know one person particularly well.

"I was pretty familiar with Chief Smith because he was our liaison on the Police Foundation before he became chief," Wagner said. "I like him a lot and am glad I get a chance to work with him."

Wagner said he plans to learn as much as he can about KCPD.



"There's a lot of data out there and a big budget with lots of issues and things to work on," he said.

One of his priorities is to figure out ways to speed up turn-around times at the Kansas City Crime Laboratory, he said. He hopes the new state-of-the-art building will help that happen.

Wagner's love of Kansas City is evident in the other organizations he's been part of. He is the former chair of both the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Kansas City and the Friends of the Kansas City Zoo. He also serves on the Board of Trustees for the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

An Oklahoma native who came to the Midwest by way of California, Wagner has been a Kansas City resident for 36 years. He met his wife, Jean, here, and they have three adult children and two grandchildren.

Wagner is a successful businessman who owned CST Industries, a global manufacturer of coated steel tanks. He sold it and bought other companies. He's now an investor and sits on the board of a couple of corporations.

When he's not at work or serving on a local board, Wagner said he enjoys watching Kansas City sports teams like the Royals and Chiefs and golfing.

*Bishop Mark Tolbert, the other new member of the Board of Police Commissioners, will be profiled in the next issue of the Informant.*

## New NPD wins Economic Development Award



The Platte County Economic Development Council honored KCPD's new North Patrol Division at its 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Business Excellence Luncheon on Dec. 8. KCPD was one of 10 companies or organizations honored for job creation and/or significant expansion and investment projects in Platte County.

The Kansas City Police Department North Patrol Division moved into its new Platte County station at 11000 Northwest Prairie View Road in June 2017. North Patrol Division relocated to its new Platte County station due to the growth in the area, proximity to KCI airport and high visibility along Interstate 29. The new station has 26,500 square feet, which is 30 percent bigger than the previous station.

# Residents' security cams help KCPD

Hundreds of Kansas City residents have signed up to directly help police solve crimes.

They're part of the new WatchKC program KCPD launched in October that has since picked up considerable momentum. Owners of more than 1,200 surveillance cameras have registered with the program.

One of the first things detectives look for when investigating a crime is if there were any security cameras in the area that may have captured what happened.

"It's an incredibly valuable investigative tool that is usually irrefutable in court," Sergeant Jake Becchina of the Law Enforcement Resource Center (LERC) said. "And because security camera technology is getting better and cheaper, more and more people and businesses are getting them."

When a crime happens, investigators have to canvass the area on foot looking to see if there are any nearby cameras in plain sight, often walking door-to-door. This process can take hours or even days, depending on how spread out the crime scene is and whether there were other events that may have led up to the crime. Although a



investigators valuable time and allow police to solve cases more quickly. Other cities have implemented similar programs and had great

success, but Kansas City's registration rate has topped that of other cities with more long-standing programs.

The new WatchKC program allows residents and businesses to register with police that they have a security camera and the address where it's located. LERC staff then put those locations on a map with each person's contact information, and only specific investigative elements at KCPD have access to that information. They have no live access to the footage, but they will know where cameras are and whom to contact about possible recordings. Registrants' information is extracted from the submittal form and kept as secure as all other information maintained by KCPD. Residents can register at <http://kcmo.gov/police/watchkc>.

WatchKC is a completely voluntary program designed to save

success, but Kansas City's registration rate has topped that of other cities with more long-standing programs.

The partnership has been featured on all local television news stations, local news radio and in several neighborhood publications including the Northeast News and the Martin City News.

Chief Richard Smith wrote on his blog that the WatchKC program was a great example of an effective community-police partnership.

"Residents often ask me and others on the department how they can help the police improve safety in Kansas City," he wrote. "Registering for WatchKC is a very easy but very powerful way for you to do so."

Detectives already are taking advantage of the program. They've told Sergeant Becchina things like:

"I use WatchKC on just about all of my cases. I think it is a valuable resource."

And, "This is a great way to quickly surmise where to go to find evidence."

them feel like one of us."

The lateral class officers said there are definitely differences between their former departments and KCPD.

Culturally, Shockley said Raytown was a much smaller agency, and it felt like it.

"You knew everyone on a first-name basis; you even knew their spouses on a first-name basis," she said.

Curtis said, "You're constantly meeting new people here (at KCPD). Everyone is pleasant and welcoming."

They agreed, however, that an agency the size of KCPD offers opportunities smaller police departments can't.

Shockley said she has always dreamed of being a Mounted Patrol or ATV officer, while Curtis said he'd like to get into narcotics investigations and eventually be a supervisor.

The 11-member lateral class will graduate alongside the traditional entrant officer class on January 11.

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# KCPD brings holiday help



Hy-Vee donated more than 580 hams for store directors and police to give away to families in need Dec. 20 at East Patrol Division. Police and several community members volunteered to help, including some of the youth basketball teams that practice in East Patrol's gym. Hy-Vee also donated three full meals to needy families and delivered them with KCPD officers.



Many units and members throughout the department adopted families so they could have a great Christmas. The Police Athletic League's annual Christmas party gave presents to more than 100 youth and let them pick one out for their families, among a host of other activities.



## Upcoming Events

January 11  
Police Academy  
Graduation

January 16  
25-Year Ring Ceremony

January 23  
Board of Police  
Commissioners Meeting

January 27  
Special Olympics Missouri  
Polar Plunge

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protect and serve with  
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# Officers getting ballistic helmets

Every patrol officer and sergeant on the Kansas City Missouri Police Department soon will receive a new \$370 piece of equipment to protect them from gunfire: a ballistic helmet.

The purchase is made possible by a unique three-way collaboration between the City, KCPD and the Police Foundation of Kansas City.

"Every police department in the country is re-evaluating its safety planning and preparedness for large-scale events based on what occurred in 2017," Chief Rick Smith said.

Getting helmets for officers has come up for years, but Chief Smith said the tipping point for him was the Oct. 1, 2017, shooting in Las Vegas that killed 58 people and injured hundreds of others in what became the worst mass shooting in U.S. history. A gunman fired on a crowd of concert-goers from a hotel room above the event.

Chief Smith saw that many of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Officers running toward that gunfire were wearing ballistic helmets.

Officers assigned to Tactical Enforcement Teams have had ballistic helmets for some time, but Chief Smith said all officers need them. Because if an active shooter situation like that in Las Vegas occurred in Kansas City, patrol officers likely would be the first to respond. The year 2017 also featured many protests throughout the U.S. that turned violent. While none in Kansas City did, Chief Smith wants

officers to be safe if they do.

"These are needed with what's happening in America today," he said.

Kansas City isn't the only department that feels that way. The Dallas Police Department received a \$1 million grant in February to purchase new ballistic helmets and bullet-resistant vests from the Home-

land Security Grants Division. Their helmet purchase came before the Las Vegas shooting but after five Dallas officers were ambushed and killed on July 7, 2016. Texas Governor Greg Abbott said upon receiving the grant, "More needs to be done to protect the brave men and women who run into danger and not away from it."

KCPD did not receive a Homeland Security grant to purchase helmets, but the department did put together a unique way to fund the \$285,270 purchase to outfit about 820 officers and sergeants. For the first time

ever, the cost of the equipment was split between the City, the Department, and the Police Foundation. It's the first public-private partnership on a safety equipment purchase, Chief Smith said.

The helmets have been ordered, and they also will serve as riot gear for patrol officers.

The department still is determining in what situations officers should don the helmets. Future goals include issuing a ballistic helmet to every officer upon their graduation from the Police Academy and getting helmets out to other elements in addition to patrol.



## Officially Speaking

### Awards

#### Life-Saving Awards

Sergeant Matthew Bandler  
Officer Nathan Hurley  
Officer Evan Tarwater  
Officer Brandon Walker  
Officer Slade Whetro  
Officer Ian Winters

#### Special Unit Citation

Youth Services Unit

#### Meritorious Service Awards

Sergeant Tim Holcomb  
Officer Michael "Scott" Throckmorton  
Sergeant Andrew Uptegrove

### Retirements

Deputy Chief Patty Higgins  
Deputy Chief Cheryl Rose  
Deputy Chief David Zimmerman  
Major Donna Greenwell  
Captain Kevin O'Sullivan  
Sergeant Janet Cannon  
Sergeant John Cisper  
Sergeant Rufus Evans  
Sergeant Steven Seward  
Sergeant Reyne Reyes  
Detective Ray Lenoir  
Officer David Elliott  
Officer Michael Hammer  
Officer Gary Knapp  
Officer George McCall, Jr.  
Officer Michael Mezzacasa

Comm. Spec. Theresa Mackey  
Admin. Asst. Marietta Epperson  
Admin. Asst. Yolanda "Frances"  
Florez  
Admin Asst. Gina Lyons  
Admin Asst. Joyce Silvers

### Obituaries

Ret. Officer Billy Kirkey  
Ret. Sergeant James Lohmeyer  
Ret. Officer Ronald Gear  
Ret. Detective Anderson Smith  
Ret. Sergeant John Phillips  
Ret. Sergeant Benjamin Way  
Ret. Captain Gregory Lee  
Ret. Officer Jan Elkins

# Three deputy chiefs retire



Deputy Chief Cheryl Rose



Deputy Chief Patty Higgins



Deputy Chief David Zimmerman